

From: Aqualyst
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/3/02 3:01pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To the DOJ:

Although I may disagree with some of the ways in which the Microsoft Corporation conducts its business strategy, Microsoft is no more harmful to me than the US Post Office, the local cable TV company, or any other of a myriad of companies that, unlike Microsoft, are monopolies in the true sense of the word. These companies are granted monopolies by government force, against which I have no recourse except to do without. Conversely, regarding Microsoft products, I can always cast my vote against them by purchasing other products.

I can think of no area in which Microsoft actually holds a true monopoly; neither in operating systems nor in any other software currently in the marketplace. I can use an open-source operating system such as Linux on my PC, or I can purchase a computer from Apple that requires me to adjust to, and buy software compatible with, their proprietary operating system. I can use Netscape, and often do, to browse the Internet from my PC with Windows installed. I can purchase excellent word processing software from Corel, instead of using Microsoft Word. I can even purchase a complete, integrated Office Suite without spending one cent on Microsoft products. The list goes on and on.

Here's what I can't do...

I can't subscribe to a competitive cable TV provider, who may offer better service at a lower price... I must use the one granted a monopoly in my neighborhood. I can't use a telephone company that may offer more value and trouble-free service in my neighborhood...I must use the government-granted monopoly in my calling area. I can't change my provider for electrical service... I must use the power company with a government-enforced monopoly in my area.

I'm sure you get my point here. The Department of Justice (if you're truly seeking justice) should be striving to eliminate all of the government-enforced monopolies in this country that do untold damage to the economy. If you question the damage that government intervention in the marketplace can cause, I would refer you to the situation in California regarding power generation.

Microsoft has earned its market position. It deserves to hold its dominance over the competition because it continues to provide me with ever-improving software and hardware, which enriches my life and makes me individually more productive. The best thing the DOJ could do would be to repeal the Sherman Antitrust Act and get out of the marketplace. The term "laissez faire" is not just a cute phrase. It is a caveat, and a marketplace axiom, that the DOJ, and the rest of the government, should observe.

There is not now, nor has there ever been, a justification for government manipulation of business. The marketplace will ultimately take care of itself through the profit motive. The Sherman Act, itself, is an atrocity which was enacted to resolve a situation caused by government intervention. One doesn't cure an illness by administering more of the poison which caused it.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Mehan

1151 Carrollton Ave.
Metairie, LA 70005